

TRIBUTE TO UNDER SECRETARY
FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS, KAREN
HUGHES

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the important work of Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes, in light of the announcement that she is resigning. Under Secretary Hughes has led efforts to improve the image of the United States overseas by changing the way the United States engages with the Muslim world.

Under Secretary Hughes has worked tirelessly to build a strong organization within the State Department that future administrations can rely upon. She has dramatically increased the number of Arabic language interviews, created three rapid response centers overseas to respond to news events, and nearly doubled the public diplomacy budget to combat negative perceptions of the United States abroad.

During her time as head of our government's public diplomacy efforts, Under Secretary Hughes has shown a deep commitment to promoting freedom and to encouraging confidence in speaking out about the values we hold dear. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

I am inserting for the RECORD Under Secretary Hughes's remarks today at the announcement of her resignation.

UNDER SECRETARY KAREN P. HUGHES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TREATY ROOM

First, I want to thank President Bush and Secretary Rice for giving me the great privilege of representing our country abroad and reaching out to the people of the world in a spirit of respect and friendship.

It's been a special honor to work for Secretary Rice, who is both a great friend and a great role model. I also want to thank my outstanding team in public diplomacy—all that we have been able to accomplish has been due to their work—and all the people of the State Department—foreign service, civil service, foreign service nationals, and presidential appointees. I've learned so much from them and I've been honored to serve with them in representing America across the world.

Later this year, in mid-December, I will be returning home to Texas. I feel that I have done what Secretary Rice and President Bush asked me to do by transforming public diplomacy and making it a national security priority, central to everything we do in government—while also engaging the private sector more extensively than ever before.

I have spent almost nine of the last 12 years of my career in government service and after commuting between Washington and Austin not nearly as often as I would like for the last two-and-a-half years, I'm looking forward to returning to private life and living in the same city with my husband.

When I look back at the last couple of years, I'm very proud of what our public diplomacy team has accomplished.

We've aggressively expanded our programs, fought for and won increased funding and put in place many innovations and institutional reforms.

They include aggressive and significantly expanded media outreach. We've created new regional media hubs, which put language

qualified foreign service officers on television in key regional media markets of Dubai, Brussels and London. A new rapid response unit monitors international television and blogs and issues a daily report to inform policy makers about what is driving international news, then provides the U.S. government's position on those issues. We've transformed the Bureau of International Information programs into a high tech hub with web sites in English and six languages, created a digital outreach team that counters misinformation and myths on blogs in Arabic (soon to add Farsi and Urdu)—and stood up a new video production unit. Our ambassadors are now empowered and expected to engage with the media, and every foreign service officer is evaluated on public diplomacy activities.

We've put in place extensive new outreach to young people, teaching English to thousands of high school students in more than 40 Muslim majority countries. Last summer, we started a new program to reach an even younger audience—8 to 14-year-olds, with a summer program teaching English, computer, arts and sports activities and leadership training. English teaching gives young people a skill they desire, a marketable skill, while opening a window to a wider world of knowledge.

I'll never forget meeting a young man in one of our English programs in Morocco. I asked him what difference it had made in his life, and he said: "I have a job and none of my friends do." He was from the same neighborhood that produced the Casablanca suicide bombers. In addition to a job, he now has a hope, a reason to live rather than kill himself and others in a suicide bombing.

We've engaged Muslim populations through a new program called citizen dialogue, which sends Muslim Americans overseas to dialogue with Muslim communities—and we've brought more than 600 religious clerics scholars and community leaders from Muslim countries to America to get to know us better.

We've engaged the private sector more extensively than ever before—leveraging more than \$800 million in partnerships ranging from disaster relief to education and health programs to working to make our airports and embassies more welcoming.

We've significantly expanded outreach to women, with a new breast cancer initiative in the Middle East and Latin America and a number of business women's mentoring initiatives.

A new partnership with U.S. higher education helped attract a record number of international students to study in America and reversed the trend of decline that began in the years after September 11th. We issued an all time high of 591,000 student visas in 2006 and traveled with university presidents across the world to encourage international students to come to America.

Our flagship programs like Fulbright at record highs, we've restarted exchanges with Iran for the first time since 1979 and participation in our education and exchange programs—people-to-people diplomacy—has grown from 27,000 in 2004 to nearly 40,000 today.

I've worked to set a more strategic direction for USG broadcasting and recruit new leadership for the Broadcasting Board of Governors and its entities.

We launched a new Global Cultural initiative, expanded sports programming, sent musical groups like the fusion funk group Ozomatli abroad with a message of respect for diversity. We started a new public diplomacy envoy program, enlisting well known Americans including Olympic skater Michelle Kwan and baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. to represent America overseas.

We have implemented a majority of the recommendations from more than 30 studies of U.S. public diplomacy, including the comprehensive Djerejian report, and developed the first inter-agency strategic communications plan for the U.S. government.

I'm very proud of what we've started, and I will continue to be a champion of public diplomacy. I will advocate for more funding and more programs, because I believe it's vitally important for the future of our increasingly interconnected world—and especially for the future of our children. I want to encourage my fellow Americans to engage with the world, to study abroad, to travel—one of my own goals in the years ahead is to improve my Spanish.

Secretary Rice, thank you for this opportunity; it's been an honor and privilege to work for you and with you, and I thank my great public diplomacy team.

CONGRATULATING STANDARD
EQUIPMENT CO. INC. OF MOBILE
ON ITS RECOGNITION AS AN
ALABAMA CENTENNIAL RE-
TAILER

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Standard Equipment Co. Inc., located in Mobile, Alabama, for being recognized by the Alabama Retail Association as an Alabama Centennial Retailer.

The Alabama Retail Association, in conjunction with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, sponsors the Retailer of the Year program. Awarded in three categories based on annual sales volume, the awards are presented at the association's annual Retailing Day luncheon.

The designation of Alabama Centennial Retailer by the Alabama Retail Association recognizes century-old retail businesses for their contributions to Alabama's past, present, and future. I am proud to recognize that two of the honorees are located in Alabama's First Congressional District.

One of this year's honorees, Standard Equipment Co. Inc., was founded in 1906 by Richard A. Christian. A distributor of industrial, construction and marine supplies, Standard was originally located at Commerce and St. Anthony streets, but for almost 50 years, the company has operated at Beauregard and Water streets near the state docks. A major supplier of maintenance, repair, and operating products, the company is now owned by E. Burnley Davis Sr. and Robert D. Wilkins.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Standard Equipment Co. Inc. for being recognized as an Alabama Centennial Retailer by the Alabama Retail Association. I know Burnley Davis, the company president, along with the company employees, their friends, families, and members of the community also join with me in praising Standard Equipment Co. Inc. for their many accomplishments and for extending thanks for their continued service to the Alabama business community and the First Congressional District.